

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CRIME COMMISSION

Question No. 89

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

In relation to data on gun crime:

- a) Has the ACC produced any data on how many of the gun crimes in Australia since 2008/09 have been perpetrated by criminals with rifles or other firearms (Firearm Categories A,B,C and D according to the 1996 National Firearms Agreement) that aren't hand guns?
- b) How many and what proportion were handguns (Category H firearms)?
- c) Of the handguns that have been used in crimes and seized by police or law enforcement since 2008/09 how many were traceable via serial numbers or any other identifying details? If other identifying details – what were they?
- d) Of the guns that have been traced by serial number or any other identifying detail how many were found to have been smuggled into Australia? How many are suspected to have been smuggled into Australia?
- e) How many of the guns seized were non-traceable through serial numbers or other identifying details?
- f) Where does the ACC or other law enforcement agencies including State and Territory police forces believe these guns originated?
- g) Of the figure produced or quoted by the ACC – that just 1 per cent of the estimated quarter of a million firearms in the hands of criminals nationally were illegally imported – how many of this one per cent were actually traced with the aid of identification details such as serial numbers etc?
- h) How many handgun seizures reported to or investigated by the ACC were untraceable due to lack of identifying details such as serial numbers?
- i) Is it the ACC's belief that in such circumstances these handguns may have been illegally imported into Australia?
- j) Does the ACC have any information on how much an illegally imported handgun costs on the black market? How does that compare with prices stretching two, three, five years ago or even 12 months?
- k) Does the ACC believe that this is a result of increase demand? If so, where is the demand coming from?
- l) Does the ACC have projections on the number of guns (and handguns) that are being smuggled across our borders?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

- a) No.
- b) See answer 1.
- c) During the period 2004 to April 2012, the ACC traced 1,209 handguns diverted to the illicit market. In addition to serial numbers and structures considered when tracing a firearm, other features and sources used to identify firearms include firearm registration data, historical firearm transfer records, digital imagery and e-mail, covert markings and firearm industry information.
- d) During the period 2004 to 2 April 2012, the ACC traced 3,186 firearms (including long-arms and handguns) diverted to the illicit market.
- grey market¹ (44.6%)
 - stolen or suspected staged theft (12.7%)
 - deactivation (3.3%)
 - failure to reconcile the interstate transfer of firearms (1.5%)
 - domestic manufacture (1.3%)
 - illegal importation (0.5%)
 - unknown method of diversion as there was insufficient information available (33.5%)
 - lost/missing and other² (2.6 %).
- e) During the period 2004 to 2 April 2012, the ACC received 3,827 illicit firearms trace requests. Of these, 3,186 were able to be traced.
- f) The firearms noted in question 5 are untraceable and as such their origin cannot be determined.
- g) Of the firearms traced by the ACC between 2004 and 2 April 2012, 0.5% were identified as being illegally imported (see question 4).
- h) The method of diversion of handguns to the illicit market was able to be assessed in 31 per cent of the handguns traced by the ACC (377 of 1,209), with a diversion method unable to be determined for 69 per cent. This is largely due to a lack of critical data, such as no available records relating to the firearm.
- i) The handguns identified in question 8 were untraceable.

¹ The grey market is part of the illicit market and comprises long-arms that were not registered in accordance with the 1996 Firearms Agreement.

² Methods of diversion captured in 'other' include failure to notify of disposal and disposing to unlicensed person.

j) Price data is influenced by a number of factors, including firearm type and availability. As such, it is not possible to make generalised comments about potential changes in the market. Illicit firearm prices vary widely—both within and between jurisdictions—and are largely influenced by the type and age of the firearm. Higher prices tend to be associated with the portability of a firearm, semi-automatic capability and 'style'. Recent reporting has indicated that a 'clean' Glock style firearm can cost \$15,000..

k)It is not possible to make generalised comments about potential changes in the market.

l) No.